

**RESPONSE TO HMIC REPORT –
HMIC National Child Protection (NCP) Inspection Programme- South Yorkshire
Police Post Inspection review.**

In response to the specific findings relating to South Yorkshire Police arising from the final HMIC report of the child protection post inspection review conducted in South Yorkshire in April/May 2015.

South Yorkshire Police – Response from the Chief Constable, David Crompton

South Yorkshire Police welcomes the HMIC report 'National Child Protection (NCP) Inspection Programme- South Yorkshire Police Post Inspection review, which was generated following their re-visit in April/May 2015.

Whilst acknowledging the comment from HMIC, 'There is still important work for South Yorkshire Police to do to improve the protection of children', I note that the Inspectorate acknowledged signs of progress. This progress is recognised in improvements to the force's initial response when attending incidents involving children at risk. HMIC also recognised that the force has prioritised child protection, and that there is strong desire at all levels to improve outcomes for children who are at risk of harm.

These comments should be measured against what was originally reported in September 2014, where it was commented on that the force had an inconsistent approach to child protection and improvements to the care of children in custody. As you are aware since the original inspection, with the support of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the force has invested heavily in resourcing the Public Protection Units (PPUs) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) teams at each district. The implementation of these new structures across Public Protection has ensured that this issue of consistency is already being addressed. Indeed one of the positive comments from HMIC stated, 'the force is developing new joint working arrangements and structures to improve consistency across its four districts'. This work continues to develop with the introduction of Safeguarding Adult Teams, which will be in place at each district PPU by September 2015.

The main area of feedback from the Inspectors highlighted the need for the force to continue to improve, especially around the area of looked after children in care homes. Whilst a great deal of work has taken place with partners to address these issues, further work is required. In order to address this further ACC Ingrid Lee has commissioned a joint inspection in relation to looked after children across the whole of South Yorkshire, with the agreement and involvement of the four Directors of Children's Services, to see how we can take this forward and improve practice.

Additionally, HMIC identified that in some areas, the recording practices remained poor and this limited the ability of staff to make good decisions about children. I have gone some way to address this by opening up access to the Case Administration Tracking System (CATS), the IT system we use to record all child and adult protection referrals, to all frontline staff and supervisors. This will enable all relevant staff to have access to child protection information. This initiative is being progressed by Information Systems in conjunction with the Head of Service in PPU.

This inspection builds on previous (other) inspections, especially the HMIC Peel Inspection 2014, (report published January 2015) in which they recognised 'that much had changed in the force over the past 12 months especially with improvements in the more specialist investigation of sexual and child related crime and safeguarding issues.

My Senior Command Team and I acknowledge that we have some way to go before we can confidently assure you and the public of South Yorkshire that we have addressed all of the issues raised by HMIC. We recognise that this will not be a quick journey but I can assure you that the good work that has already taken place will continue. In relation to the original inspection and action plan generated from that visit, we will continue to implement the changes necessary to improve our services to vulnerable children.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight one final comment by HMIC, which reported, 'There are tangible signs that the force is improving its service to children in some elements of its service to children, so I am encouraged that the senior leadership of South Yorkshire Police demonstrated the determination to make improvements.'

South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner Response

This report paints a mixed picture. This should not surprise us because it comes at a particular moment in time. The initial inspection was in May last year. But it was overtaken by the Jay report which came out in August. That changed everything. For the first time the full extent of child sexual exploitation was revealed. Since then South Yorkshire Police have had to look at every area of their practice, past and present.

The report shows the force where they have made progress but more particularly where improvements still have to be made. Part of my task will be to ensure that what is recommended is implemented.

Since the follow-up inspection on which this report is based there has been further progress.

We have begun to see perpetrators arrested and charged. Prosecutions will follow later this year.

We are also having better partnership arrangements. Police officers and social workers are being located together in the same buildings across the four district authorities. The Rotherham Children's Commissioner has said this is working well there.

I have put extra resources into work with vulnerable people, including victims of CSE.

I set up a Victims, Survivors and their Families panel. This month they met with police officers for the first time so that the force can hear directly from them about their experiences. This will enable the police to learn how to improve their response to victims, so they are treated with sensitivity and respect.

I recently announced the Drew Review. Professor John Drew will be looking across the whole of South Yorkshire – Barnsley, Doncaster and Sheffield as well as Rotherham - to assure me that South Yorkshire Police are doing everything that can be done in each of the districts.



Dr Alan Billings
Police and Crime Commissioner